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ABSTRACT

Male and female mid-level administrators at a large research university were compared on personal and demographic variables; perceptions of opportunities and job/organizational characteristics; job satisfaction; and degree of commitment to job, institution, and career. A total of 192 male and 38 female administrators participated. While males and females did not differ in their commitment to their position and career, 38.6% of the men indicated that their commitment to the institution was very important, compared to 19.1% of the women. The women administrators indicated that interactions with students were of greater importance to their work commitment than did the men, but they assigned less importance to salary and fringe benefits than did their male colleagues. More satisfied male administrators rated their positions as being high in autonomy, job feedback, and skill variety than did less satisfied administrators. Additional variables that were related significantly to job satisfaction for male administrators were age, the degree to which the organization was cooperative and caring, and salary. The degree of caring and support at the university was also important to women, as were skill variety and opportunities (i.e., the likelihood of finding a similar position at another university within or outside the state). (SW)

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ABSTRACT

University Mid-Level Administrators:
Comparisons Between Men and Women on
Work Experience, Commitment, and Job Satisfaction

Knowledge of the similarities and differences in the work experience of men and women administrators may be useful for institutions in their affirmative action efforts. Based on survey data collected at a large research university, this paper compares male and female mid-level administrators on personal and demographic variables and on perceptions of job, organizational, and opportunity characteristics. Comparisons also are made between the men and women administrators concerning job satisfaction, degree of commitment to job, institution, and career, and reasons contributing to commitment and job satisfaction. The study is based on theories concerning work characteristics, job satisfaction, and commitment.

Mid-level administrators in colleges and universities have increased in number and importance as higher education has grown. The literature in sociology, organizational psychology, and business administration is fairly extensive on the topic of middle managers. However, only a few studies illuminate the basic roles, functions, and experiences of middle administrators in higher education in recent years (Austin, 1984; Scott, 1978; Thomas, 1978).

Study of the work experience of mid-level administrators in higher education is worthwhile both for its contribution to our limited body of theory and knowlege about this particular group of collegiate employees and for its practical implications. Efficiency and quality performance become even more important as universities face declining resources, increased federal and state demands for accountability, and changing societal expectations of higher education. Greater knowledge about aspects of the work experience of mid-level administrators in higher education should be useful to those who recognize the crucial role these individuals play.

In addition to the need for more information about the work experience of mid-level administrators, there is interest in the particular experience of women in administrative posts. Several studies indicate that the affirmative action legislation in the early 1970's has prompted institutions to include more women in the faculty and administrative ranks; nevertheless, while discrepancies between numbers of women and men and their salaries and ranks are diminishing, women are still underrepresented in higher education administration (Astin and Snyder, 1982; Moore, 1983).

Though affirmative action guidelines have encouraged an increased proportion of women in candidate pools and, in some institutions, greater representation of women in the lower ranks of the faculty or administration,

women still face challenges in progressing upward in the organization (Mark, 1981; Menges and Exum, 1983). While affirmative action stresses access, there has been much less attention to "the conditions necessary for the achievement of career mobility and the maintenance of a favorable environment for previously excluded groups once they have gained entry into administration" (Tickamyer and Bokemeier, 1984, p. 337). Characteristics of the job and the work environment may affect the commitment, satisfaction, and career progress of women and men differently. For example, while numerous studies suggest thaat such intrinsic aspects of work as degree of autonomy, skill variety, and growth opportunities relate positively to satisfaction with and commitment to one's work, most of this research has focused on employee groups predominantly composed of males (Tickamyer and Bokemeir, 1984). Research on differences in the way men and women administrators perceive characteristics of their jobs, their work environments, and opportunities for professional growth, and investigation of differences in the factors related to their job satisfaction and work commitment fill a gap in our knowledge. Comparative findings may provide information useful for encouraging the retention and progress of women administrators in academe.

This study examines whether men and women administrators in the same university differ in terms of their perceptions of their work experience as mid-level administrators. The paper specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. How did the men and women administrators studied differ in terms of such personal and demographic characteristics as age, area of employment within the university, original intent to pursue a career in higher education, and previous employment experience?

2. Were there differences between men and women mid-level administrators in terms of the comparative importance of their commitment to the position held, to the university, and to the career in higher education? Did they differ in the importance of factors contributing to their overall work commitment?

3. Did men and women differ significantly in their perceptions of various job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and career growth opportunities?

4. Did the men and women mid-level administrators differ in their levels of general job satisfaction? Did demographic, job, environmental, opportunity, and extrinsic characteristics relate to satisfaction differently for the male and female administrators?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on several conceptual frameworks concerning job satisfaction, work commitment, and related characteristics of the work experience. Hackman and Oldham (1980) posit a model of job design in which various job characteristics contribute to certain psychological states associated with such outcomes as high general job satisfaction, high internal work motivation, and high work effectiveness. The core job characteristics in their model are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job. The opportunity to deal with others through one's work is an important characteristic also. Similarly, Super and Hall (1978) posit career satisfaction to be influenced positively by autonomy in conducting one's responsibilities, a sense of challenge in the work, and appropriate and sufficient rewards.

Other researchers and theorists are emphasizing the beneficial results associated with environments characterized by participation, openness, and collaboration (Kanter, 1983; Ouchi, 1981; Powers and Powers, 1983). Organizations that promote a sense of fairness, a sense of caring and support among employees, and staff involvement in decision-making find they generate many good ideas and often better decisions. Furthermore, open, caring, participative environments respond to individuals' needs for psychological growth, autonomy, and personal achievement. Greater individual satisfaction as well as increased productivity are likely results.

Kanter (1977) has emphasized the role played by the structure of opportunity in affecting an individual's work experience. Employees who perceive that their opportunities for professional growth are limited are likely to seek satisfaction outside of the work environment, experience low self-esteem, reduce their expectations, and stress interpersonal relationships more than involvement in the work itself. Those individuals who anticipate growth opportunities are likely to be more involved, risk-taking, committed employees.

Given these theories, one might expect the satisfaction of men and women mid-level administrators in academe to be related to their perceptions of characteristics of their jobs as well as their perceptions of organizational environment characteristics and opportunity possibilities. More specifically, such job characteristics as autonomy, skill variety, task significance, opportunities to deal with others, and feedback provided from doing the job would be expected to relate positively to general job satisfaction. Orgnaizational characteristics such as the degree to which administrators perceive the environment to be fair, caring, cooperative, and one in which professional staff are involved in decision-making also would be expected to relate positively to job satisfaction and to account significantly for variance in job satisfaction scores. Additionally, expectations of opportunities for professional growth would be expected to relate positively to job satisfaction. Also, since the extrinsic reward of salary is often used as a motivator, it might account for some differences in satisfaction of administrators. However, Herzberg's (1973) theory, though debated, suggests that an extrinsic reward such as salary may have more relationship to dissatisfaction than it does to satisfaction. Furthermore, one might expect the general job satisfaction of mid-level administrators in academe (as compared to middle administrators in other sectors) to be more related to

their perceptions of characteristics of their jobs and of the work environment than to salary; after all, they have chosen to take positions in an organizational sector whose culture typically emphasizes service rather than profit.

Building on these frameworks, this study compares men and women mid-level administrators on several sets of variables and examines those sets of variables as possible correlates of male and female academic mid-level administrators' general job satisfaction. The variable sets included are: 1) Personal Characteristics (included in this study are age and number of years employed at the university); 2) Perceived Job Characteristics (included in this study are skill variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job itself, and opportunities to deal with others); 3) Perceived Organizational Characteristics (included in this study are administrators' perceptions of the degree to which the university's environment is cooperative, fair, caring, and characterized by the involvement of professional staff in decision-making; 4) Perceived Opportunities for Professional Growth; and 5) one Extrinsic Characteristic (salary level).

The study also draws on the conceptual literature concerning commitment (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982) and defines commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with the job, the institution, and the career in higher education. Individuals may have greater commitment to one of these "targets" (job, institution, or career) than to the others. When discussing factors contributing to commitment, the literature points to the notion of exchange (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; March and Simon, 1958). Certain expectations and needs of employees are met through their commitment to and involvement in their jobs, organizations, and careers. According to Kanter (1972), these reasons for commitment may be classified as instrumental, affective, or moral. She explains:

> a person orients himself to a social system instrumentally, affectively, and morally. That is, he orients himself with respect to the rewards and costs that are involved in participating in the system, with respect to his emotional attachment to the people in the system, and with respect to the moral compellingness of the norms and beliefs of the system (p. 68).

In investigating differences between men and women administrators in terms of their reasons for commitment to their work, this study included a variety of items from each classification (instrumental, affective, and moral).

In summary, the study focuses on differences between men and women administrators in several areas: 1) personal and demographic variables; 2) perceptions of various work-related variables; 3) the relationship between various work-related variables and general job satisfaction; and 4) patterns of commitment to job, institution, and career as well as reasons for general work commitment. The variables and questions included in the study are based on conceptual frameworks in the literature concerning work experience.

METHOD

Sample

Data for this study were collected as part of a survey concerning aspects of university mid-level administrators' work experience conducted during late winter, 1982 and early spring, 1983. In this study, mid-level administrators are defined as those individuals who report to the top-level officers of a university or to other middle administrators, and who often supervise assistants and first-line administrators. They may hold either line or staff positions, but they may not have their primary appointments as faculty members. Thus, directors and assistant directors of support services such as counseling, admissions, and financial aid; directors and assistant directors of institutional research, finance, and budget offices; and staff assistants to top-level administrators are all defined as mid-level administrators. Deans and Vice Presidents are not included.

The sample for the study included 417 individuals at a large, public research university who met the definition of mid-level administrator. A 62 percent response rate (N = 260) was obtained to the survey. Approximately three-quarters, or 192, of the usable responses were written by men, and one-quarter, or 68, by women.

Measures

Demographic Variables

Available demographic information included age, years employed at the university, area of employment within the university, primary career plans at the time of beginning employment, and employment experience prior to their current employment at the university where they were employed at the time of the study.

Commitment Variables

Commitment variables were of two types. First, comparative importance of commitment to the position, commitment to the university, and commitment to the career was measured. In conceptualizing commitment, Mowday, Porter, and Steers' (1982) definition of organizational commitment was used:

> ...the relative strength of an individual's identification in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (p. 27).

The same definition for commitment with the substitution of the terms "job" and "career" was accepted as a definition of commitment to the job or to the career.

The second type of commitment variables concerned reasons contributing to individuals' commitment to their work, at the three levels of job, institution, and career. Respondents were asked to rate 11 items in terms of

their importance as reasons for commitment to the job, 13 items in terms of their importance as reasons for commitment to the university, and 13 items in terms of their importance as reasons for commitment to the career in higher education. To the extent possible, items listed were designed to be comparable across the three target areas (job, institution, and career). Each variable was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = not important at all, 5 = extremely important). Factor analysis was used to determine the most salient dimensions among all 37 variables. Variables were checked for skewness, which was considered not too great given the robustness of the technique of factor analyses.

The analyses began with a principal components analysis followed by orthogonal rotation of the factors using the Kaiser varimax method. The resulting eight-factor model was conceptually understandable, included at least three variables on each factor, and explained 56 percent of the total variance. An index was constructed from each factor, consisting of the mean of a respondent's answers to the variables loading most highly on each factor. Generally, variables were included in an index if they loaded at .50 or higher on that factor. Two indexes each (Interesting Colleagues and Other People; Recognition and Prestige) included varibles that loaded at .46 and .45, respectively, since each of these variables loaded highly on no other factor. One variable was not used in constructing any indices, since it did not load highly on any factor. Analyses of coefficient alpha for each factor index enabled the researcher to determine whether any variables should be added or deleted. In the determination of individual's scores on each index, one item of missing data was allowed for each index (See Note 1).

The indices, each ranging in score from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important), reflect eight basic types of reasons for mid-level

administrators' overall commitment to their work (including the job, the institution, and the career). The eight indices are as follows:

a. Reasons relating to Students: Respondents with a high score on this measure rated as important reasons for their commitment to their work the opportunities they have to interact with students and the pride they take in the contribution of their positions, their institution, and colleges and universities in general to the growth and learning of students.

b. Reasons relating to Salary and Fringe Benefits: Individuals with a high score on this index felt that the salary they earn, the salary ranges in their institution and in higher education in general, and such fringe benefits as vacation time, sick time, and retirement benefits are very important in contributing to their commitment to their work.

c. Reasons relating to Autonomy: Those with high scores on this measure felt that the degree of autonomy available in their positions and generally available in administrative positions at their university and in administrative positions in higher education are important reasons for commitment to their work.

d. Reasons relating to Surrounding Opportunities: Those administrators who scored high on this measure believed that an important reason for their commitment to their work is the accessibility of various facilities and the social and cultural opportunities at their university in particular and at all colleges and universities generally.

e. Reasons relating to Pride: A sense of pride was an important reason for commitment to their work for individuals who scored high on this measure. This feeling includes pride in the contribution the respondent's unit makes to the institution, pride in the contribution their university makes in expanding the abilities and horizons of students, pride in the contribution their university as well as other universities and colleges makes to society, and pride that the central purpose of their university as well as of other colleges and universities is to serve people.

f. Reasons relating to Faculty: For those who scored high on this index, the opportunity to interact with faculty members at their university and, overall, to work in an environment where there are faculty members are important reasons for commitment to the job, the institution, and the career.

g. Reasons relating to Interactions with Administrators and Other Interesting People: Those who scored high on this factor felt that important reasons for their commitment to their work are the opportunities they have to meet interesting people and colleagues through their daily work, at the university where

they work, and at other colleges and universities where they might work.

h. Reasons relating to Recognition and Prestige: Those who scored high on this factor had the sense that an important reason for their work commitment is the recognition and prestige associated with their positions, with the university where they are employed, and generally with working in higher education.

Job Characteristics

The job characteristic variables, developed and tested by Hackman and Oldham (1980) as part of their Job Diagnostic Survey, included respondents' perceptions of the degree to which their positions involve skill variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job itself, and opportunities to deal with others. Except for feedback from the job itself, the variables were constructed from two or three survey items each. Feedback from the job was measured by one item only. Each job characteristic variable was measured on a one to seven Likert-like scale (1 = low, 7 = high). Definitions of each variable are provided below:

a) Skill Variety: "The degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of a number of different skills and talents of the person" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 78).

b) Task Significance: "The degree to which the job has substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are in the immediate organization or in the world at large" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 79).

c. Autonomy: "The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 80).

d. Feedback from the Job Itself: "The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 80).

e. Opportunities to Deal With Others: "The degree to which the job requires employees to work closely with other people in carrying out the work activities (including dealings with other organization members and with external organizational 'clients')" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 104).

Organizational Environment Characteristics

The organizational variables were developed, tested, and revised specifically for the survey instrument by the researcher. These variables also were measured on one to seven Likert-like scales (1 = low, 7 = high) and measured respondents' perceptions of the degree to which the organizational environment reflects particular characteristics. Perceptions of the following characteristics were investigated:

a) Caring Environment: The degree to which the environment is characterized by a sense of personal concern and support among and between those working in it.

b) Cooperative Workplace: The degree to which the environment is characterized by a sense of cooperation and helpfulness among and between those working in it.

c) Fair Environment: The degree to which the environment is characterized as one in which policies, decisions, and interactions are governed by a sense of fairness.

d) Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making: The degree to which professional staff are involved in decision-making at the institution.

Extrinsic Characteristic: Salary

Only one extrinsic characteristic of a respondent's work, salary, was included in this study. Information concerning salary was collected according to levels; while the first level included salaries under $15,000, levels beginning at $15,000 increased at $5,000 intervals (i.e., $15,000 to $19,999; $20,000 to $24,999).

Variables concerning Perceptions of Opportunities for Career Movement

Four variables were used to measure the degree to which respondents perceived they had opportunities for career movement. Each opportunity variable was measured on a five-point scale (1 = unable to judge, 2 = not very likely, 3 = rather unlikely, 4 = somewhat likely, 5 = highly likely). The

four opportunity variables are defined as follows:

a) Perceived Opportunities for Advancement within the Institution: An individual's perception of the likelihood of being able to attain a new position in the institution at a higher salary grade.

b) Perceived Opportunites for Moving to Another College or University within the State: An individual's perception of the likelihood of finding a similar position in another college or university within the state.

c) Perceived Opportunities for Moving to Another College or University Outside the State: An individual's perception of finding a similar position in a college or university in another state.

d. Perceived Opportunities for Desirable Employment in Non-Higher Education Settings: An individual's perception of the likelihood of finding a position outside higher education using comparable skills to those used in the present position.

General Job Satisfaction

General job satisfaction is an index based on the mean of several items and developed and tested by Hackman and Oldham (1980). This variable was defined as "an overall measure of the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy in his or her work" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). It is viewed in this study as an attitude that continues over time, is identifiable by a respondent, and is measurable on a set of Likert-scale items. It is measured by the mean of such questions as "Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with your job?", "How frequently do you think of quitting the job?" (reverse scored), and "How satisfied are you with the kind of functions and tasks you perform in your job?" (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). The job satisfaction variable also was measured on a seven-point Likert-like scale (1 = low, 7 = high).

ANALYSIS

To summarize, the data used in this study included sex; age; years employed at the university; area of employment within the university; primary

career plans at the time of beginning employment; employment prior to current employment at the university; variables ranking comparative importance of commitment to job, institution, and career; eight five-point index scales measuring importance of reasons for commitment to work; five job characteristics measured on seven-point interval-appearing scales; four organizational characteristics measured on seven-point scales; one extrinsic characteristic of the job (salary); four five-point variables measuring perceptions of the likelihood of career movement opportunities; and general job satisfaction, measured on a seven-point scale. The statistical analyses used to answer the research questions included percentage comparisons, univariate statistics, and multiple regression. Details concerning the analyses are discussed in the results section.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented according to the research questions indicated previously.

Demographic Characteristics

How did the men and women administrators studied differ in terms of present age, area of employment within the university, original intent to pursue a career in higher education, and previous employment experience?

[Insert Table 1 about here.]

Table 1 summarizes the results of comparisons of means and percentages on these variables. The t-test comparing ages at the time of the survey shows a significant difference in the mean ages of male and female administrators at the university where the study was conducted. The mean age for men was 47.3 years compared to 44.0 years for women administrators. Men and women were compared in terms of areas of employment through percentages as shown in Section 2 of Table 1. Though the chi square statistic is not interpretable

due to a number of cells with fewer than five cases, some differences between males and females are apparent. A greater proportion of the total group of males as compared to the proportion of females indicated that they worked in financial operations. While twenty percent of the women indicated their work pertained to academic affairs, only ten percent of the men indicated this area of work. Only a very small proportion of women were employed in the university plant and maintenance department. Large percentages of both men and women indicated that they worked in "other" areas of the university, apparently not finding an appropriate description of their unit in the available list. On the average, the male administrators have worked at the university where the study was conducted significantly longer than the women (15 years compared to 11 years, respectively).

The data suggest that men and women entered careers in higher education with somewhat different intentions. While one-third of the women responded that work in a college or university was their primary career plan when they began working, only 17.7 percent of the men held a similar plan ($X2 = 6.71$, $p = .01$). Section V of Table 1 indicates that the previous employment experience for those administrators who did work elsewhere before joining the staff of the university where the study was conducted appeared to differ by sex. While almost 34 percent of the women had substantial or at least some previous experience working at another college or university, only approximately 20 percent of the men had comparable experience. On the other hand, slightly more than half the male administrators indicated substantial or some previous work experience in private industry or business, compared to slightly less than one-third of the women administrators. One-quarter of the women noted that the university where they were employed at the time of the study was their first employer, compared to just fifteen percent of the males.

Patterns of Commitment

Were there differences between men and women mid-level administrators in the comparative importance of their commitment to the position held, to the university, and to the career in higher education? Did they differ in the importance of factors contributing to their work commitment?

[Insert Table 2 about here.]

Respondents were asked to rank the degree of their commitment to the position held, the institution where employed, and the career in higher education. Percentage comparisons presented in Table 2 show how men and women administrators ranked their commitment to each of these three aspects of their work. No differences were found between the sexes in their ranking of commitment to the position in relation to job and career. Statistical differences were found between males and females in regard to their ranking of their commitment to the institution. While 38.6 percent of the men indicated that their commitment to the institution was most important, only 19.1 percent of the women indicated similarly. When differences between the sexes on the ranking of commitment to the career were examined, the chi square statistic was not significant. However, women tended to indicate that the commitment to the career was of primary or secondary importance to a greater extent than did the men (46.3 percent of the women compared to 35.2 percent of the men).

[Insert Table 3 about here.]

When the men and women were compared on the basis of the importance of eight possible reasons contributing to their commitment to their work (Table 3), they differed significantly in the importance they assigned to just two variables. The women administrators indicated that interactions with students

were of greater importance in contributing to their work commitment than did the men (3.22 mean for women compared to 2.87 for men), but they assigned less importance to salary and fringe benefits than did their male colleagues (3.16 mean for women compared to 3.45 mean for men). Both males and females evaluated most highly as factors contributing to their commitment the autonomy in their work and the pride they experience in working in a university.

Perceptions of Job Characteristics, Organizational Characteristics, and Career Growth Opportunities

Did men and women administrators differ significantly in their perceptions of various job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and career growth opportunities?

[Insert Table 4 about here.]

Table 4 summarizes the results of oneway analyses of variance to compare the mean scores of men and women on their perceptions of these variables. The only statistically significant difference between men and women on perceptions of job characteristics concerned the degree of autonomy in the position. Women perceived they had greater autonomy than did the men (6.28 mean for women compared to 5.97 mean for men on a seven-point scale). Men and women were not different from each other in their perceptions of the degree to which their jobs involved task significance, feedback from doing the job, skill variety, and opportunities to deal with others.

While not a "perception" about one's job, salary is an important characteristic associated with a position. The men and women administrators in this study differed significantly in their reported salary levels. While the mean salary for male administrators was between $30,000 and $34,999, for females the comparable mean was between $25,000 and $25,999.

When their perceptions of organizational characteristics were compared, the males and females differed significantly in their perceptions of the degree to which the university workplace was fair and the degree to which it had a "caring environment" as well as the extent to which professional staff are involved in decision-making. The female administrators perceived the workplace environment to be less fair (3.49 mean for women compared to 3.76 mean for men), less "caring" and supportive (2.89 mean for women compared to 3.29 mean for men), and to be characteristized by lower involvement of professional staff in decision-making (3.10 mean for women compared to 3.46 mean for men) than did the males. Though women were less positive than men, neither male nor female administrators rated the environment very strongly in these characteristics. Both groups of administrators, however, did perceive the workplace to be rather high in its "cooperativeness."

Perceptions of opportunities for career movement did not differ significantly by sex. Both men and women perceived only a very small likelihood of having an opportunity within the next five year period to move into a new position at their university at a higher level of responsibility. They were somewhat more positive about the likelihood of assuming a similar position at another university in the state, a similar position at a university outside the state, or a position outside of higher education using comparable skills.

Job Satisfaction and Related Variables

Did the men and women mid-level administrators differ in their levels of general job satisfaction? Did demographic, job, environmental, opportunity, and extrinsic characteristics relate to satisfaction differently for the male and female administrators?

When degree of general job satisfaction of men and women was compared through one-way analysis of variance, no significant difference was found (see Table 5). Both the men and women mid-level administrators in this study indicated rather high general job satisfaction (5.44 mean score for men and 5.65 mean score for women).

[Insert Table 5 about here.]

Multiple regression analyses were used to examine the relationships of several sets of variables to the administrator's general job satisfaction. The variable sets included the following: administrators' personal characteristics; perceptions of job characteristics; perceptions of organizational characteristics; perceptions of opportunity variables; and the extrinsic characteristic of salary. For each sex taken separately, the relationship of each set of independent variables to the dependent variable of satisfaction was tested . Within each set, a stepwise entry process of the significant variables, followed by forced entry of the remaining variables, was used in order to determine the importance of each independent variable. Results are summarized in Tables 8, 9, and 10. Intercorrelations between the variables for males and for females are reported in Tables 6 and 7, respectively. The discussion following indicates those variables significantly related to satisfaction for each of the sexes.

[Insert Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 about here.]

Personal Characteristics: Age and number of years employed at the university where the study was conducted were the personal variables tested for their relationship with satisfaction. For men, age was the only personal variable significantly related to satisfaction; this variable accounted for 8

percent of the variation in satisfaction scores among men (Table 9). For the women administrators, differences in satisfaction were not related significantly to age or years employed at the university (Table 8).

Job Characteristics: Autonomy, feedback from the job, skill variety, task significance, and opportunities to deal with others were the job characteristics examined for their relationship with general job satisfaction. For the males, the stepwise regression indicated that autonomy entered the equation first, followed by feedback from the job itself on the second step, and skill variety on the third step. Autonomy alone accounted for 26 percent of the variation in male administrators' job satisfaction. Perceptions of feedback from the job and skill variety added 11 percent to the explained variance (Table 9). Neither task significance nor opportunities to deal with others related significantly to the general job satisfaction of male administrators.

For the women administrators, only skill variety entered the stepwise equation, explaining seven percent of the variance in women's satisfaction scores (Table 9). Autonomy, feedback from the job, task significance, and opportunities to deal with others were not related significantly to general satisfaction. More satisfied male administrators rated their positions as being higher in autonomy, feedback from the job, and skill variety than did less satisfied administrators. Among the women, when perceptions of job characteristics were examined, more satisfied administrators could be distinquished from those less satisfied only on the basis of perception of skill variety.

Organizational Characteristics: For men, the degree to which the environment was perceived as cooperative explained 22 percent of the variance in satisfaction scores. Perception of the degree to which the environment was

caring and supportive added three percent to the explained variance at the second step of the stepwise regression (Table 9). Perceptions of the degree to which the organization was fair and the extent to which professional staff were involved in decision-making were not significantly related to differences in satisfaction among male administrators (Table 8). Among the females, only perception of the degree to which the environment can be characterized as caring related significantly to general job satisfaction (Table 8), explaining seven percent of the variance (Table 9). Those females mid-level administrators who were more satisfied tended to perceive the organization to be characterized by a greater sense of caring and support than did their less satisfied colleagues.

Opportunity Variables: The four opportunity variables entered into the regression analysis were the following: likelihood of moving into a new position at the university, at a higher level, within the next five years; likelihood of finding a similar position at another university within the state; likelihood of finding a similar position outside the state; and likelihood of finding a position outside of higher education using comparable skills. None of these opportunity variables were significantly related to general job satisfaction for the male administrators (Table 8). For the women, however, the likelihood of finding a position at another university within the state as well as the likelihood of finding a similar position at a university outside the state both related significantly to job satisfaction. More satisfied female administrators rated both the likelihood of finding a position at a university within the state and the likelihood of finding a position outside the state higher than those less satisfied (Table 8).

Extrinsic Characteristic: Level of salary was significantly related to job satisfaction for the male administrators (Table 8), explaining six percent of the variance. More satisfied male administrators tended to have higher salaries. In contrast, salary was not related to satisfaction for the women administrators (Table 8).

Summary: The following variables within each set were related significantly to job satisfaction for the male administrators: 1) among the personal characteristics, age; 2) among the job characteristics, autonomy, feedback from the job, and skill variety; 3) among the environmental characteristics, the degree to which the organization is cooperative and the degree to which it is caring; and 4) salary. The degree of autonomy in the job and the degree to which the environment is perceived as cooperative each entered the regression equations for their variable sets first and each individually explained rather substantial percentages of the variance in job satisfaction (26 percent and 22 percent, respectively). Among the women administrators, the following variables within each set were related significantly to job satisfaction: 1) among the job characteristics, skill variety; 2) among the environmental variables, perceptions of the degree to which the organization is caring and supportive; and 3) among the opportunity variables, the likelihood of finding a similar position at another university within the state and the likelihood of finding a similar position at a university outside the state. None of these variables explained as much variance in job satisfaction scores among the women administrators as did some of the variables for the male administrators.

DISCUSSION

While the findings from this study are limited by the fact that it is based on a single institutional sample, the results do raise some interesting

questions and suggest directions for future research. Note should be made that, in the sample for this study, the male administrators tended on the average to be slightly older, employed somewhat longer at the university, and earning a somewhat higher salary. These differences are perhaps explained by the fact that affirmative action efforts are fairly recent. A larger number of women employed in university administration has been a development of recent years. It is likely that other universities would find their women administrators to have, on the average, shorter tenures with the institution and lower salary levels also.

One interesting issue raised by the study's results concerns the nature of the work commitment of male and female administrators. It is interesting that greater proportions of the men indicated their commitment to the institution was of primary importance, while more women noted that the career in higher education was of primary importance. Greater proportions of women than men also indicated that work in a college or university was their primary career plan when they began working. Furthermore, women were more likely to have had previous work experience in higher education while men were more often previously employed in business or industry. These findings could be interpreted to suggest that women in mid-level administration (at least in this study) may have greater intention to make work in higher education a career compared to men. Their male colleagues, in contrast, may believe that their skills are useful in several employment sectors and may not necessarily intend to pursue an entire career in higher education. The commitment male administrators presently express to the university perhaps can be transferred rather easily to an institution in industry or some other sector. Another possibility is that, while the women may see their work as a career that leads to other universities and colleges, the men may focus more on their bond

to the particular institution. The finding that the perceived likelihood of finding other positions in higher education was related positively and significantly to job satisfaction for women but not for men also suggests that the possibility of a continued career in higher education, though not necessarily at one institution, is especially important to the women.

When reasons for commitment to one's work were examined, only a few differences were found between the male and female administrators. Several explanations may be offered for the higher rating given by women to the importance of interactions with students. It is possible that the female administrators occupy positions that involve more interaction with students. More frequent interaction may increase the importance of interacting with students as a factor contributing to commitment. It is also possible that the women more than the men may be oriented to interpersonal relations as especially important aspects of their work. The finding that the women rated salary and fringe benefits less important as factors contributing to their work commitment perhaps may be explained by the fact that their average earnings are somewhat less than for the men. On the other hand, salary levels and fringe benefits may not be as important to women administrators as compared to men regardless of their salary level.

Men and women did not differ significantly on their perceptions of a number of job and organizational characteristics. However, it is noteworthy that women administrators were likely to perceive the organizational environment as less fair, less caring, and characterized by less involvement of professional staff in decision-making than did their male colleagues. The research does not identify whether perceptions of lower degrees of fairness or of less involvement of staff in decision-making relate to any form of actual discrimination against women. In any case, regardless of the institution's

policies, women at least perceived these organizational characteristics differently from the men. That women administrators indicated that they experienced more autonomy in their jobs than did men was an interesting finding. However, while autonomy related significantly to job satisfaction for the male administrators, it did not have a significant relationship with satisfaction for women. While high autonomy has been shown in many studies to be an important and desirable intrinsic job characteristic and one that relates to job satisfaction, its role and importance in the work experience of women may be different than for men.

The study's findings concerning correlates of general job satisfaction deserve particular attention. While for men, a number of variables related to job satisfaction in the expected way, the job and organizational variables used in this study did not account for much of the variation in the women's satisfaction scores. As noted earlier in this article, the findings from other studies concerning job satisfaction may be flawed by using samples primarily composed of males (Tickamyer and Bokemeier, 1984). The satisfaction of women administrators and of men administrators may relate to different variables.

This study, though limited in its sample, suggests that elements of the work experience may be somewhat different for men and women mid-level administrators. While the two sexes were quite similar in some of their perceptions, the women may maintain a greater interest in and commitment to a career in higher education. Perhaps the women perceive the academic environment to offer more career possibilities than the corporate environment. The women and men in this study were different in their perceptions of the organizational enivronment in terms of the degree of fairness, sense of caring, and extent of staff involvement in decisions. Perhaps their experiences are actually different or perhaps they use different criteria to

TABLE 1

evaluate these variables. In any case, their perceptions differ, which may have implications for how they do their work and evaluate their work experience. Future research might examine whether the differences in primary commitment of men and women relate to how they do their work, to their career progress, or to their satisfaction with their work. Future research should also explore the differences in correlates of job satisfaction for men and women administrators. Knowledge of what accounts for variance in job satisfaction of women would be useful to institutions seeking to enhance the work experience and career progress of women administrators. If affirmative action concerns are to be extended to the experience of women once they are staff members of a university, more should be learned about how they perceive their work experience and what contributes to their commitment and satisfaction.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Male and Female Administrators
on Selected Demographic Variables

I. Present Age	Men N = 192		Women N = 68			
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	P
Years	47.31	9.26	44.05	9.85	2.44	.01

II. Area of Employment	Men N=190 %	Women N=68 %
Financial Operations	20.5	7.4
Personnel Relations	5.3	7.4
Institutional Research and/or Planning	2.6	4.4
Academic Affairs	10.5	20.6
Student Services	13.7	14.7
University Plant and Maintenance	12.1	1.5
Other	35.2	44.1

X^2 not interpretable due to 25% of cells with < 5 cases.

III. Length of Employment at the University Where the Study was Conducted	Men N = 191		Women N = 67			
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	P
Years	15.53	8.57	11.42	6.95	3.91	.00

IV. Primary Career Plans to Work in a University	Men N=192 %	Women N=68 %
Yes	17.7	33.8
No	82.3	66.2

$x^2_1 = 6.71$, $p = .01$

TABLE 1
(continued)

V. Previous Employment Experience before Working at University Where Study was Conducted	Men N = 192		Women N = 68	
	Substantial %	Some %	Substantial %	Some %
Another College or University	15.6	4.2	27.9	5.9
Elementary or Secondary Schools	5.2	3.6	11.8	1.5
Higher Education Agency	-	.5	-	-
Government Agency	7.3	4.1	5.9	4.4
Military	7.3	7.3	-	-
Private Industry/Business	40.1	11.0	23.5	7.4
Health-Related Career	3.1	1.6	-	-
Religous Vocation	.5	-	-	-
Voluntary Social Service Agency	-	.5	2.9	1.5
None (university was first employer)	15.6	-	23.5	1.5

TABLE 2

Relationship of Sex to Ranking of Importance of Commitment to Position, Institution, and Career

I. Ranking of Importance of Commitment to Position

	N	Most Important	Second in Importance	Least Important
Men	188	46.8	34.6	18.6
Women	68	57.4	26.5	16.2

$X^2_2 = 2.30$, $p = .32$

II. Ranking of Importance of Commitment to Institution

	N	Most Important	Second in Importance	Least Important
Men	188	38.6	46.6	14.8
Women	68	19.1	51.5	29.4

$\overline{X}^2_2 = 11.64$, $p = .00$

III. Ranking of Importance of Commitment to Career

	N	Most Important	Second in Importance	Least Important
Men	188	17.6	17.6	64.9
Women	68	25.4	20.9	53.7

$X^2_2 = 2.83$, $p = .24$

TABLE 3

Comparison of Men and Women Administrators
on Importance of Factors Contributing to Commitment
To Their Work

Reasons Contributing to Commitment	Men N	Men $\bar{X}$[a]	Men SD	Women N	Women $\bar{X}$	Women SD	t	P
Interactions with Students	191	2.87	1.03	65	3.22	1.00	-2.35	.02
Salary/ Fringe Benefits	192	3.45	.70	68	3.16	.73	2.87	.00
Autonomy	192	3.90	.83	68	4.08	.73	-1.54	.12
Facilities/ Cultural Opportunities	191	3.26	.88	66	3.48	.84	-1.79	.07
Pride	190	3.66	.70	65	3.67	.81	-.11	.91
Interactions with Faculty	192	2.92	.96	67	3.13	1.05	-1.48	.14
Interactions with Interesting Collegues and Others	191	3.50	.68	66	3.59	.85	-.74	.46
Recognition and Prestige	192	3.54	.74	68	3.58	.77	-.46	.65

[a] Scale for importance of reasons in contrubuting to commitment (1 = low, 5 = high).

TABLE 4

Comparison of Male and Females Administrators
Perceptions Concerning Various Work-Related Variables
and Levels of Salary

Variables	Men N	Men $\bar{X}$[a]	Men SD	Women N	Women $\bar{X}$	Women SD	F[b]	p
Job Characteristics								
Task Significance	189	5.87	.99	68	5.73	.97	.98	.32
Autonomy	189	5.97	.92	68	6.28	.68	6.53	.01[c]
Job Feedback	192	5.31	1.25	67	5.31	1.16	.00	.99
Skill Variety	190	4.05	.66	67	4.16	.68	1.32	.25
Dealing with Others	190	6.37	.67	68	6.54	.80	2.91	.09
Extrinsic Characteristic								
Salary	192	5.80	1.85	68	4.43	1.72	28.74	.00
Organizational Characteristics								
Cooperative Environment	192	5.84	.92	68	5.64	.97	2.12	.15
Fair Environment	192	3.76	.86	67	3.49	.93	4.44	.04
Caring Environment	184	3.29	.99	66	2.89	.98	8.00	.01
Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making	191	3.46	1.05	67	3.10	.82	6.12	.01
Perceptions of Opportunities								
New Position at University	191	2.85	1.04	68	2.87	1.05	.01	.92
Similar Position at Another University in State	191	3.26	1.19	66	3.32	1.27	.10	.75
Similar Position at University outside State	191	4.02	1.10	67	3.92	1.23	.35	.55
Position outside Higher Education	190	4.00	1.07	67	3.92	1.15	.23	.63

[a] Scale for Job Characteristics (1 = low, 7 = high); Scale for Salary Level (5 = $30,000 to $34,999; 4 = $25,00 to $29,999; see text); Scale for Organizational Characteristics (1 = low, 7 = high); Scale for Perceptions of Opportunities (1 = lo 5 = high).

[b] df for F range from 1,248 to 1,258 depending on random missing data.

[c] The assumption of equality of variance was violated when the analysis of variance was performed with this variable.

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TABLE 5

Comparison of Male and Female Administrators on Job Satisfaction

Variable	Men			Women					
	N	$\bar{X}$[a]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	F	P
General Job Satisfaction	190	5.44	1.63	67	5.65	1.00	1/255	1.76	.19

[a] Scale for General Job Satisfaction (1 = low, 7 = high).

TABLE 6

Intercorrelations Among All Variables
Included in Study for Male Administrators

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Years at University	1.00															
2. Age	.65	1.00														
3. Skill Variety	.08	.04	1.00													
4. Task Significance	.10	.13	.36	1.00												
5. Autonomy	.14	.07	.50	.30	1.00											
6. Feedback from Job	-.08	.12	.34	.30	.32	1.00										
7. Dealing with Others	-.10	-.04	.21	.41	.18	.22	1.00									
8. Caring Environment	.23	.30	.14	.05	.23	.08	.03	1.00								
9. Cooperative Environment	.32	.24	.28	.18	.32	.24	-.06	.46	1.00							
10. Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making	.03	.06	.28	.18	.34	.26	.11	.48	.46	1.00						
11. Salary	.28	.32	.17	.21	.27	.10	.15	.27	.28	.25	1.00					
12. Opportunity for New Position at University	-.16	-.22	.08	.04	.04	.14	.07	.05	.06	.21	-.05	1.00				
13. Opportunity at Another University in State	-.08	-.11	.12	.16	.02	.10	.19	-.07	-.04	-.03	-.04	.23	1.00			
14. Similar Position Outside State	-.22	-.33	.09	.18	.09	.03	.14	-.14	-.06	.02	.11	.19	.53	1.00		
15. Comparable Position Outside Higher Education	-.20	-.28	.13	.10	.01	.05	.13	-.20	-.16	.02	-.04	.19	.28	.50	1.00	
16. General Job Satisfaction	.25	.29	.48	.32	.51	.42	.11	.38	.47	.35	.26	.10	.08	.03	.04	1.00

TABLE 7

Intercorrelations Among All Variables
Included in Study for Female Administrators

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Years at University	1.00															
2. Age	.53	1.00														
3. Skill Variety	.04	-.01	1.00													
4. Task Significance	.06	.24	-.02	1.00												
5. Autonomy	.19	.07	.02	.09	1.00											
6. Feedback from Job	.08	.33	.17	.16	.01	1.00										
7. Dealing with Others	-.11	-.27	.40	-.01	.15	.01	1.00									
8. Caring Environment	.04	.23	-.07	.24	.11	-.05	-.36	1.00								
9. Cooperative Environment	.17	.24	.01	.16	.02	.10	-.21	.31	1.00							
10. Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making	-.03	.26	.28	-.10	.00	.20	-.13	.30	-.07	1.00						
11. Salary	.06	.27	.30	.15	.17	-.05	.29	.13	.14	.08	1.00					
12. Opportunity for New Position at University	-.18	-.28	.10	-.03	-.07	.08	.12	-.07	.23	.05	.01	1.00				
13. Opportunity at Another University in State	-.11	-.28	.25	.02	-.04	.00	.27	-.02	-.20	.03	.07	.34	1.00			
14. Similar Position Outside State	-.10	-.26	.02	.07	-.08	-.06	.13	-.06	-.08	.01	-.14	.17	.65	1.00		
15. Comparable Position Outside Higher Education	-.25	-.30	.22	.06	.01	.11	.23	-.10	.00	.14	-.10	.09	.12	.34	1.00	
16. General Job Satisfaction	.03	.17	.29	.11	.10	.15	.06	.29	-.08	.27	.04	.08	.26	-.06	-.29	1.00

TABLE 8

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis
for Male and Female Administrators
of Items in Each Variable Set on Job Satisfaction

Variable Set	Source of Variation	$\bar{X}$[a]	SD	F[b]	Beta
Personal Characteristics	Males				
	Age	47.31	9.26	6.08**	.23
	Years Employed at University	15.53	8.55	1.22	.10
	Females				
	Age	44.06	9.86	2.16	.21
	Years Employed at University	11.42	6.90	.32	-.08
Job Characteristics	Males				
	Autonomy	5.97	.91	20.05***	.30
	Feedback from Job	5.31	1.25	13.56***	.23
	Skill Variety	4.05	.66	11.00***	.23
	Dealing with Others	6.37	.67	2.16	-.09
	Task Significance	5.87	.99	2.90	.11
	Females				
	Autonomy	6.28	.68	.64	.09
	Feedback from Job	5.31	1.15	.48	.08
	Skill Variety	4.16	.68	5.25*	.30
	Dealing with Others	6.54	.80	.36	-.08
	Task Significance	5.73	.97	.55	.09
Organizational Characteristics	Males				
	Cooperative Environment	5.84	.92	19.26***	.33
	Caring Environment	3.29	.97	3.51[c]	.15
	Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making	3.46	1.05	1.36	.09
	Fair Environment	3.76	.86	.69	.07
	Females				
	Cooperative Environment	5.65	.97	1.35	-.15
	Caring Environment	2.89	.96	4.13*	.33
	Professional Staff Involved in Decision-Making	3.10	.81	2.06	.18
	Fair Environment	3.49	.92	.17	-.06

TABLE 8
(continued)

Variable Set	Source of Variation	$\bar{X}$[a]	SD	F[b]	Beta
Opportunity Variables	Males				
	New Position at University	2.85	1.03	1.26	.08
	Similar Position at Another University in State	3.26	1.19	.63	.07
	Similar Position at University outside State	4.02	1.10	.09	-.03
	Position outside Higher Education	4.00	1.07	.04	.02
	Females				
	New Position at University	2.87	1.05	.02	-.02
	Similar Position at Another University in State	3.32	1.27	9.89**	.50
	Similar Position at University outside State	3.92	1.23	4.51*	-.34
	Position outside Higher Education	3.92	1.15	1.08	-.13
Extrinsic Characteristic	Males				
	Salary	5.80	1.85	14.31***	.26
	Females				
	Salary	4.43	1.72	.13	.04

[a] Scale for Means of Job Characteristic and Organizational Characteristic variables (1 = low, 7 = high). Scale for means of opportunity variables (1 = low, 5 = high).

[b] Univariate F at end of analyses.

[c] Though the univariate F-statistic for this variable at end of analyses of the variable set was not significant, it did enter the stepwise regression summarized in Table 9.

* $P \leq .05$
** $P \leq .01$
*** $P \leq .001$

TABLE 9

Summary of Significant Steps
in Each Variable Set
to Predict Administrators' Job Satisfaction

Variable Sets	Step	Variable That Enters	R^2	Gain	df	F
Personal Characteristics						
Males						
	1	Age	.08	-	1/190	17.74***
Females						
		No variable entered.				
Job Characteristics						
Males						
	1	Autonomy	.26	-	1/190	67.74***
	2	Feedback from Job	.33	.07	2/189	47.82***
	3	Skill Variety	.37	.04	3/188	38.26***
Females						
	1	Skill Variety	.07	-	1/66	5.97*
Environmental Characteristics						
Males						
	1	Cooperative Environment	.22	-	1/190	54.39***
	2	Caring Environment	.25	.03	2/189	32.74***
Females						
	1	Caring Environment	.07	-	1/66	6.25*
Opportunity Variables						
Males						
	1	No variable entered.				
Females						
	1	Similar Position at Another University in State	.05	-	1/66	4.78*
	2	Similar Position at University Outside State	.14	.09	2/65	6.23**
Extrinsic Characteristic						
Male						
	1	Salary	.06	-	1/190	14.31***
Females						
	1	No variable entered.				

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

TABLE 10

Multiple Correlation and Percent of Variance
in Job Satisfaction of Male and Females Administrators
Explained by Variable Sets with Only Significant Variables
Included in Each Set

Variable Type	R	R^2	df[a]	F
Male Administrators				
Personal Characteristics	.29	.08	1/190	17.74***
Job Characteristics	.62	.37	3/188	38.26***
Environmental Characteristics	.51	.25	2/189	32.74***
Opportunity Variables [b]	-	-	-	-
Extrinsic Characteristic	.26	.06	1/190	14.31***
Female Administrators				
Personal Characteristics [b]	-	-	-	-
Job Characteristics	.29	.07	1/66	5.97*
Environmental Characteristics	.29	.07	1/66	6.25**
Opportunity Variables	.40	.14	2/65	6.23**
Extrinsic Characteristic [b]	-	-	-	-

[a] Degrees of freedom vary across analyses due to missing data on some variables.

[b] Since no variables explained a significant amount of the variance, none were entered into the equation.

* $P \leq .05$
** $P \leq .01$
*** $P \leq .001$

NOTES

1 More detailed explanation of the construction of the indexes may be found in the following: Austin, A.E. 1984 Work Orientation of University Mid-Level Administrators: Patterns, Antecedents, and Outcomes of Commitment. Unpublished doctoral disseration, The University of Michigan.

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